

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5897

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Human Services, Mental Health & Housing, February 17, 2015  
Ways & Means, February 26, 2015

**Title:** An act relating to providing funding for medical evaluations of suspected victims of child abuse.

**Brief Description:** Requiring costs for the examination of a suspected victim of assault of a child to be paid by the state. [**Revised for 1st Substitute:** Concerning funding for medical evaluations of suspected victims of child abuse.]

**Sponsors:** Senators Cleveland, Darneille, McAuliffe, Kohl-Welles and Chase.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Human Services, Mental Health & Housing: 2/12/15, 2/17/15 [DP-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/24/15, 2/26/15 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH & HOUSING

**Majority Report:** Do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators O'Ban, Chair; Miloscia, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Minority Member; Hargrove and Padden.

**Staff:** Lindsay Erickson (786-7465)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5897 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Hill, Chair; Braun, Vice Chair; Dammeier, Vice Chair; Honeyford, Vice Chair, Capital Budget Chair; Hargrove, Ranking Member; Keiser, Assistant Ranking Member on the Capital Budget; Ranker, Ranking Minority Member, Operating; Bailey, Becker, Billig, Brown, Conway, Fraser, Hasegawa, Hatfield, Hewitt, Kohl-Welles, O'Ban, Parlette, Rolfes, Schoesler and Warnick.

**Staff:** Julie Murray (786-7711)

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Background:** In 1973 the Legislature established the Crime Victims' Compensation Fund (CVCF) to cover victims' medical bills and other costs associated with the offender's crime. State law requires the CVCF to pay for initial sexual assault examinations that are conducted for gathering evidence for possible prosecution. These activities are known as the SAFE program. The Washington Administrative Code specifies that the state is the primary payer of this benefit and the client is not required to file an application with the CVCF to receive this benefit. The Washington Department of Labor and Industries administers the funds associated with the CVCF. Currently, child sexual abuse exams are eligible for reimbursement through the SAFE program, but child physical abuse exams are not eligible for CVCF coverage in the same manner as the SAFE program.

**Summary of Bill (Recommended Substitute):** Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, the CVCF, secondary to any other insurance, is available for reimbursement of costs related to the examination of a suspected victim of assault of a child when the exam is conducted within 75 days of the filing of a petition for dependency by the Department of Social and Health Services. The act expires June 30, 2019.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE (Recommended Substitute):** Subject to the availability of funds appropriated for this purpose, the CVCF, secondary to any other insurance, is available for reimbursement of costs related to the examination of a suspected victim of assault of a child when the exam is conducted within 75 days of the filing of a petition for dependency by the Department of Social and Health Services. The act expires June 30, 2019.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing):** PRO: It seems unfair to reimburse for one type of victimization and not the other. This bill fixes that disparity. Medical evaluation is important in the cases of suspected physical abuse to assess injuries such as pattern of bruises and burns, broken bones, or head trauma. The visit allows photo documentation and collection of lab or radiographic images. Early identification of abusive injuries can help remove the victim from harm's way, reduce risk of further life-altering injuries, and provide evidence for prosecution. This bill supports children and their families in times of crisis.

**Persons Testifying (Human Services, Mental Health & Housing):** PRO: Senator Cleveland, prime sponsor; Lisa Lyons, Ph.D., Manager, Pediatric Specialty Programs, Legacy Health System.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Ways & Means):** None.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.